DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 873 CS 006 870

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TITLE A Multifaceted View of the Roles of the Reading Specialist.
PUB DATE Dec 82
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (32nd, Clearwater, FL, December 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Reading Consultants; Reading Research; *Role Perception; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Role; *Values

ABSTRACT

To explore the facets of the roles of the reading specialist, data were gathered from 23 specialists concerning their values, their perceptions of the values of their principals, and their assessment of the skills in performing their various roles. The specialists were asked to read descriptions for the following roles: (1) resource person, (2) adviser, (3) inservice leader, (4) investigator, (5) diagnostician, (6) instructor of teachers, (7) evaluator, and (8) remedial teacher. They then completed teacher value and principal value scales and rated their own skill level for each role. Results indicated that the roles most highly valued by the reading specialists were those of resource persons, instructors of other teachers, diagnosticians, and advisers. Though the order differed, the specialists thought that their principals would value these same roles, but would attach a higher value to the role of remedial teacher. The specialists perceived themselves as most skillful in the roles of remedial teachers, instructors of other teachers, resource persons, and diagnosticians. Greatest discrepancies between values and self-perceived skill were for the roles of inservice leader, adviser, and evaluator. For the role of remedial teacher, however, ratings were higher for skill than for value. (Role descriptions are included.) (FL)

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A Multifaceted View of the Roles of the Reading Specialist

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We appreciate the help of Sue Allen in recording data, Elinor Dulin, Norma McGehee, and Maggie Sharp in typing various drafts, and most of all a very special group of reading specialists in sharing with us their values and perceptions.

CS206870

Paper presented at National Reading Conference, Clearwater, Florida, December 1982.
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A reading specialist may fill many roles. The percentage of time actually spent on a given role, however, may be influenced not only by that professional's own values, but by factors such as his/her administrator's perceived values.

IRA's Evaluation Committee (1979) surveyed reading specialists to determine the roles on which they spent 20% or more of their time. Most frequently checked were the activities of remedial reading, diagnosis, developing instructional materials and teaching developmental reading.

Using Robinson and Rauch's (1965) list of 7 roles, Mangieri and Heimberger (1980) asked both reading specialists and school administrators to rank in importance the roles of a reading consultant. They found that "these two groups have widely varying beliefs about how reading specialists can best spend their time." (p. 529)

While this work serves as useful background, some questions are left unanswered. For example, Robinson and Rauch's list of roles of the reading consultant did not include the role of remedial teacher. Yet the full time reading consultant is a rare and endangered species. There are far more professionals functioning primarily as reading teachers or reading specialists, providing direct service to students and incorporating to greater or lesser extent the other roles described by Robinson and Rauch.

Excluding the role of remedial teacher in surveying reading specialists can lead to distortions. Consider, for example, a reading specialist who spends 85% of her time in remedial instruction. If she were asked only to indicate how her time is apportioned across the seven other roles, she might put 40% for diagnostician, 20% for instructor of other teachers, 15% for

in-service leader, etc. But this would not indicate that in-service received 15% of her time but that it received 15% of the 15% of her time (2¼) remaining after the 85% devoted to the remedial role. It is essential, then, that the list of roles for reading specialists include the role of remedial teacher.

The choice of scaling procedure can also lead to distortion. Mangieri and Heimberger, for example, asked their subjects to rank the roles from most to least important. While this can provide information about the order of importance, it gives no information about relative distance between points. The first ranked role, for example, might be viewed as only a little more important than the second, or it might be seen as twenty times as important. Rankings would not differentiate between these two cases.

Many reading teachers state that the most important influences on their distribution of time across job roles are their principal's values. It would therefore be useful to assess not only what reading teachers believe but also what they believe their administrator's beliefs to be. It is also possible that values for a given role are related to one's skill in that role. Information about reading teachers'values, their perceptions of their administrators' values, and the reading teachers'self-assessed skills in various roles would be needed to explor: these issues.

In order to explore a number of facets of the roles of the reading specialist, data were gathered in this study on these three variables and their interrelationships (subjects were also asked to indicate the time they actually allotted to each role and the time they would ideally like to allot to each role. Analysis of these data are presented in Hutson and Fortune, 1983.)

Analysis was organized primarily in terms of these sets of questions:

1. Are there differences between the values expressed by reading specialists and the values they believe their administrators hold?

It was expected, for example, that the role of remedial teacher

would be the highest rated on the administrator's values scale, and that the reading specialists's mean ratings of their own values for this role would be significantly less that their ratings of their principals' values for this role.

2. Are there differences between values and skills in various roles? No specific hypotheses were formulated for this exploratory question, examined in terms of simple differences between a) ratings on the teacher-value scale and those on the skill scale; and b) ratings on the principal-value scale and those on the skill scale.

3. Are there significant positive relations between values and skills within roles?

Method

Sample and Procedure

Twenty-three reading specialists were asked to read the eight role descriptions in Table 1, to rate each one on three 10-point scales. They were asked to have the percentages of time in each scale sum to 100%. For the value and skill scales the reading specialists were told they could use the full range of rating 0-10, but were asked to use the following anchor points to guide them:

For the teacher value and principal value scales --

1 = very unimportant - job could be done satisfactorily without this role.

5 = of some importance - job should include at least some attention to this role

10 = very important - this is an essential component of a well-done job.

For the skill assessment scale --

1 = very unskillful - I know such a role exists but feel quite unprepared for it

5 = some skill - I succeed in this role about 75% of the times I try

10 = very skillful - I'm quite comfortable in this role

Analysis

For these three scales, raw scores for rating were used for analysis. For those raters whose time allocations did not equal 100%, percentages of time were prorated before being entered into analysis. For description of responses and questions about simple differences, mean ratings, standard deviations, and differences between ratings were calculated. For selected questions, t tests for significance of differences in dependent proportions were completed. For questions about interrelationships, Pearson product moment correlations were computed, and factor analysis was conducted.

Results and Discussion

Findings will be discussed in this order: 1) description and differences between reading specialists' values and those they believed their principals held or each role, 2) differences between ratings for values and self-perceived skills, and 3) correlations between values and skills.

Values of Reading Specialists and Administrators

The roles most highly rated by reading specialists (Table 2A) were those of resource person, instructor of other teachers, diagnostician, and advisor. Administrators were believed to attach highest values to the roles of diagnostician, remedial teacher, resource person, and instructor of teachers.

The role of remedial reading teacher was not the role receiving the highest ratings for perceptions by administrators, though it was second, and the closely related role of diagnostician was first. The difference between mean ratings for specialists' own values and for their perception of their administrators' values are depicted in (Figure 1.)

Differences between Values and Skills

The reading specialists as a group rated themselves as most skillful in the roles of remedial teacher, instructor of other teachers, resource person, and diagnostician. They saw themselves as least skillful in the roles of investigator, in-service leader, and evaluator.

Values and skills cannot be so directly compared as can the two value scales, yet to have little skill in a valued role may well be more of a problem than to have little skill in an unimportant role. For this reason, differences between ratings for reading specialists' values and for their self-perceived skill in each of the roles was examined (Table 2B). The greatest discrepancy was for the role of in-service leader, which the reading specialists valued but in which they felt some lack of skill. Some degree of discrepancy can also be seen for the roles of advisor and evaluator. On the other hand, the mean ratings for skill as remedial teacher were higher than the mean ratings of the reading specialists' own values for the roles of remedial teacher and investigator.

Discomfort may be felt not only when one's own values for a given role are not supported by skills but when there is a discrepancy between a professionals' skills and his/her principal's values. The mean ratings for self-assessed skill, however, equalled or exceeded the mean ratings for administrators' perceived value.

In individual cases, though, patterns varied. Perceptions of administrators' values higher than the self-rating of skill, when it occurred, was most common in roles such as evaluator, in-service leader, investigator, and advisor. There were, on the other hand, cases of "surplus" skill, in which the reading specialist felt skillful in a role but also felt that that role was not seen by her administrator as very important. And then there was "Dr. Pangloss," whose own values and skills (almost all rated as 10) almost perfectly matched those of her principal, in the best of all possible worlds.

Correlations between Values and Skills

Strongest relationships between reading specialists' own values and those they perceived in their administrators' (Table 3) were for the roles of investigator, remedial teacher, evaluator, and in-service leader. Not all of these correlations in this set, however, were positive or significantly different from zero.

Reading specialists' values were most strongly related to their self-reported skills for the roles of resource person (.44) and evaluator (.55). Only for the role of evaluator were correlations in all three sets significant.

The pattern of relationships between administrators' values (as perceived by reading specialists) and reading specialists' ratings of their own skills showed significant correlations for the roles of diagnostician, investigator, and evaluator, and lower and nonsignificant correlations for the other roles. The correlations of teachers' self-perceived skill with administrators' perceived values were not uniformly lower than the correlations of skills with teachers' own values.

Overall Structure of Relationships among Values

The correlations among and between reading teachers' values for each of the eight roles and their perceptions of their principals' values for these roles are shown in Table 4. As can be noted, most of the intercorrelations across roles for reading teachers' beliefs about their principals' value were positive and significantly different from zero, with the exceptions of the role of remedial teacher, for which correlations were negative in sign but essentially zero in value.

Among the correlations between perceived values of principals' and the reading specialists' own values, only a few were significant, though some of

these, such as the correlations for the roles of investigator (.80) and for in-service leader (.64) were significant at the .001 level. The strongest relationships, except for the correlation of teacher's values for the role of resource persons and principals' values for the role of remedial teacher, were on the diagonal (values for the same roles). In contrast to the intercorrelations for perceived values of principals, the intercorrelations for reading specialists' own values were in general low. One exception was the correlation of .98 for the roles of diagnostician and instructor of teachers.

These results suggest that while reading specialists' own values and their beliefs about their principals' values are structured in different ways, somewhat similar clusters of roles are found in both cases.

The correlations for each set of values were entered into factor analysis. Principal factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were submitted to varimax rotation. In both cases that resulted in 3-factor orthogonal solutions (Table 5). Because the sample size is small, only loading of .45 or higher are discussed; these higher values, though, should reflect reasonably stable relationships.

For reading specialists' values, based on generally low intercorrelations among roles, only two iterations were required to attain communality estimates. The three factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 accounted for 73% of the total variance. Factor 1 indicated a clustering of values for the roles of diagnostician, instructor of teachers, and in-service leader. A weaker loading was seen for the role of evaluator. Factor 2 was defined by loadings for the roles of advisor and resource person. Factor 3 indexed the shared variablility of the roles of investigator and evaluator, with a weak negative loading for the role of remedial teacher. Factor 1 might be described as service roles, Factor 2 as advisory roles, and Factor 3 as supervisory roles.

For the values that reading specialists believed their principals held for these roles, intercorrelations were stronger, and 16 iterations were used to estimate communality. The three factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 accounted for 88% of the total variance. A large percentage of the variance was accounted for by the first factor. In this rotated factor matrix there is also a cluster of roles 3, 5, and 6 and of roles 1 and 2, but in this case both clusters load on Factor 1. Roles 4 and 7 cluster, in this case with role 3, on Factor 2. Roles 7 and 8 both load on Factor 3, indicating that for at least some subjects responses to these two scales are similar, though the overall correlation between administrators' perceived values for roles 7 and 8 was only .21.

Factor 1 may represent perceived administrative values for the advisory/service roles, while Factor 2 respresents the more supervisory roles. Factor 3 may represent direct instruction (at least part of the evaluative function often involves periodic monitoring of children's progress by hearing them read individually and in some schools the reading specialist places all children in reading groups in their classrooms).

Discussion

These results indicate that the roles most highly valued by these reading specialists were those of resource persons, instructor of other teachers, diagnostician, and advisor. Though the order differed, the reading specialists thought that their principals would value these same roles (except that of advisor), but would also attach high value to the role of remedial teacher.

The "ideal" reading specialist from the administrators' point of view, as inferred from these value ratings, would focus primarily on the traditional roles of diagnostician, remedial teacher, and resource person. The "ideal" reading specialist from the reading specialists' own point of view, would also

focus heavily on the roles of diagnostician and resource person (but somewhat less on the role of remediator, and would also have substantial involvement in the roles of instructor of teachers and advisor. Individuals varied -- their ideal roles, sense of readiness for some roles, current experience, and perceptions of thelikelihood of fulfilling those roles differed.

The reading specialists in this group saw themselves as most skillful in the roles of remedial teacher, instructor of other teachers, resource person, and diagnostician. Greatest discrepancies between values and self-perceived skill were felt for the role of in-service leader and (a smaller discrepancy) for the roles of advisor and evaluator. For the role of remedial teacher, however, ratings for skill were higher than those for value. For the group as a whole, the mean ratings for self-assessed skill equalled or exceeded the mean ratings for their perceptions of the value their administrators placed on that role. Individuals varied, though, and where administrators' values received higher ratings than reading specialists' skills, it was likely to be in the roles of evaluator, in-service leader, investigator, and advisor.

Correlations between reading specialists' own values and those they believed their administrators held for the same roles were mixed -- some were positive and significantly different from zero, while for other roles, the correlations were essentially zero. Correlations of teachers' values for one role with principals' values for other roles were even less often significant. Self perceived skill was positively related (for most roles), to reading specialists' values and to perceived values of administrators. The roles for which skill was highly related to both sets of values were those of resource person.

Factor analysis indicated that there were in both sets of value ratings clusters identified as service roles, advisory roles, supervisory roles, and direct instructional roles. These clusters were organized somewhat differently in the two sets of value ratings. The clustering of responses to some roles suggests either that the list can be shortened by combining some roles or that the role definitions should be more clearly separated. For example, the roles of diagnostician and instructor (of teachers) were highly correlated. This may in part be because the definition (Table 1) for diagnostician in the Robinson and Rauch list says, in part, "attempts to help teachers...make use of information from diagnoses in their teaching," while the definition for instructor includes the line "helps specific students at times, especially those very retarded in reading." It might be possible to shorten the list to the four clusters found here, but for the moment it's probably best to use the full list of roles, including the role of remedial specialist.

The role of remedial teacher plays a prominent role in the value system and the time allocation (see Hutson, 1983) of many reading specialists but a low priority in others. It is also a potential point of discrepancy between reading specialist and administrator, and should be included in any study of the roles of reading specialists.

These reading specialists valued and seemed to feel the need for additional skill in the roles of in-service leader and advisor. Such concerns might be the focus for continuing professional development even among such skilled professionals.

This study asked reading specialists what they thought and what they thought their principals thought. It would be interesting to extend this multifaceted view to gather responses from the principals as well, showing their values and those they thought their reading specialists held. By assessing the degree to which these groups share values and "read" each other correctly, such a multifaceted format could serve as a springboard for discussion of the best ways to use valuable professional resources.

Table 1

Roles of the Reading Specialist

1. As a resource person, the reading specialist supplies materials on request, helps select and evaluate materials (including tests), suggests methods appropriate to individual needs, and answers questions about reading asked by staff members and members of the community.

2. As an advisor, the reading specialist advises administrators, teachers, and other members of the staff about the teaching of reading within the school or school system, keeps the school staff up to date on new developments in reading as reflected in research reports, experimentation in other school districts, and reports at professional meetings, and confers with parents, in order to interpret the school reading program or discuss individual problems.

3. As an in-service leader, the reading specialist arranges for and occasionally teaches in-service courses in reading, conducts demonstration lessons in the classroom of individual teachers or before groups of teachers, directs or arranges for short-term informal sessions, or workshops, in which groups of teachers may give specific attention to certain problems that arise in carrying out the instructional program in reading, and plans and helps to implement the total school in-service program, especially those aspects which are directed toward the training of new teachers.

4. As an investigator, the reading specialist encourages teachers to experiment with new material and methods, designs research plans involving a group of teachers, the school, or the school system and reports the results of these research studies.

5. As a diagnostician, the reading specialist directs or conducts diagnoses of individual students who appear to be severely retarded in reading, helps teachers learn to diagnose more effectively, interprets the results of diagnoses to staff members, to parents, and sometimes to students themselves, and attempts to help teachers, in regular classrooms or remedial situations, to make use of information from diagnoses in their teaching.

6. As an instructor, the reading specialist helps teachers, formally and informally, to learn about methods and meterials that will be useful to them, helps specific students at times, especially those very retarded in reading, and may teach a group (remedial or developmental) in order to try out new ideas or demonstrate certain procedures as a part of teacher training.

7. As an evaluator, the reading specialist directs, supervises, or coordinates school-wide testing programs involving reading achievement and capacity testing, interprets test results to the staff and community, investigates the curriculum and teaching procedures to ascertain ways of correcting faults demonstrated by test results, conducts with the help of the total staff complete periodical evaluations of the reading program, and assists in the selection of new tests to be used in a school program.

8. As a remedial teacher, the reading specialist provides direct service to students.

Table 2

Mean Ratings for Values and Skills

A. Differences between Reading Teachers' Values and Administrators' Values

Role	Reading Specialists' Values		Administrators' Perceived Values		Difference
	$\bar{x}$	sd	$\bar{x}$	sd	
1. Resource person	9.83	(0.83)	8.65	(2.82)	1.18
2. Advisor	9.13	(1.94)	7.00	(3.73)	2.13
3. In-service leader	8.61	(2.23)	6.22	(3.49)	2.39
4. Investigator	6.04	(2.95)	4.52	(3.46)	1.52
5. Diagnostician	9.74	(1.05)	9.30	(1.72)	0.44
6. Instructor (of teachers)	9.78	(1.04)	7.96	(2.77)	1.82
7. Evaluator	8.57	(2.25)	7.43	(3.26)	1.13
8. Remedial teacher	8.35	(2.62)	9.13	(1.94)	-0.78

B. Differences between Reading Teachers' Values and Their Skills

Role	Reading Specialists' Values		Self-perceived skill		Difference
	$\bar{x}$	sd	$\bar{x}$	sd	
1. Resource person	9.83	(0.83)	9.52	(1.24)	0.31
2. Advisor	9.13	(1.94)	8.00	(2.36)	1.13
3. In-service leader	8.61	(2.23)	6.96	(2.84)	1.65
4. Investigator	6.04	(2.95)	5.35	(3.04)	0.69
5. Diagnostician	9.74	(1.05)	9.48	(1.31)	0.26
6. Instructor (of teachers)	9.78	(1.04)	9.57	(1.44)	0.21
7. Evaluator	8.57	(2.25)	7.65	(2.62)	0.92
8. Remedial teacher	8.35	(2.62)	9.74	(1.05)	-1.39

*n=23

Table 3

Correlations between Values and Skills

	Teachers' Values/ Administrators' Perceived Values	Teachers' Values/ Self-Assessed Skill	Admin.'s Perceived Values/Teachers' Self-Assessed Skill
Role:			
1. Resource person	-.10	.44*	.40*
2. Advisor	.22	.25	.18
3. In-Service leader	.64***	.28	.26
4. Investigator	.80***	.35	.38*
5. Diagnostician	-.10	-.00	.13
6. Instructor (of teachers)	-.16	-.07	.05
7. Evaluator	.51**	.55**	.52**
8. Remedial teacher	.51**	-.16	-.00

n=23, * p<.05, ** p<.01

Table 4

Intercorrelation of Reading Teachers' Values
and Principals' Values

	Teachers' Values								Principals' Values							
Teachers' Values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1.00	.46*	.06	.08	.15	-.05	-.14	-.14	-.10	-.18	-.24	-.03	-.09	-.16	-.17	-.10
2		1.00	.34	.17	-.00	-.10	-.30	-.07	.19	.22	.26	.34	.15	.08	.13	-.21
3			1.00	.20	.36*	.35*	.26	-.02	.19	.35*	.64***	.23	.03	.25	.24	-.03
4				1.00	-.27	-.29	.40*	-.30	.11	.26	.47*	.80***	.24	.13	.32	-.23
5					1.00	.98***	.31	.25	-.12	-.21	.03	-.35	-.10	-.19	.13	.44*
6						1.00	.34	.28	-.10	-.18	.08	-.34	-.09	-.16	.16	.46*
7							1.00	-.03	.03	.22	.37*	.30	.20	-.02	.51**	.22
8								1.00	.49**	.19	.13	-.14	.32	.10	.01	.51**
Principals' Values																
1									1.00	.59***	.43*	.09	.52**	.57**	.25	-.14
2										1.00	.79***	.50**	.48*	.79***	.45*	-.22
3											1.00	.62***	.40*	.57**	.51**	-.07
4												1.00	.40*	.25	.48**	-.23
5													1.00	.19	.46*	-.12
6														1.00	.27	-.22
7															1.00	.21
8																1.00

p< .05 **p< .01 ***p< .001

Table 5

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrices for Reading Specialists' Own Values and Their Perceptions of Their Administrators Values

	Reading Specialists' Values			Administrators' Perceived Values		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. Resource person		.64		.75		
2. Advisor		.73		.86	(.42)	
3. In-service leader	.45			.59	.56	
4. Investigator			.71		.97	
5. Diagnostician	.96					
6. Instructor (of teachers)	.96			.77		
7. Evaluator	(.43)		.47		.58	.60
8. Remedial teacher						.50
Eigenvalues	2.497	1.776	1.566	3.577	0.972	0.674
% of common variance	51.8%	26.5%	21.7%	68.5%	18.6%	12.9%

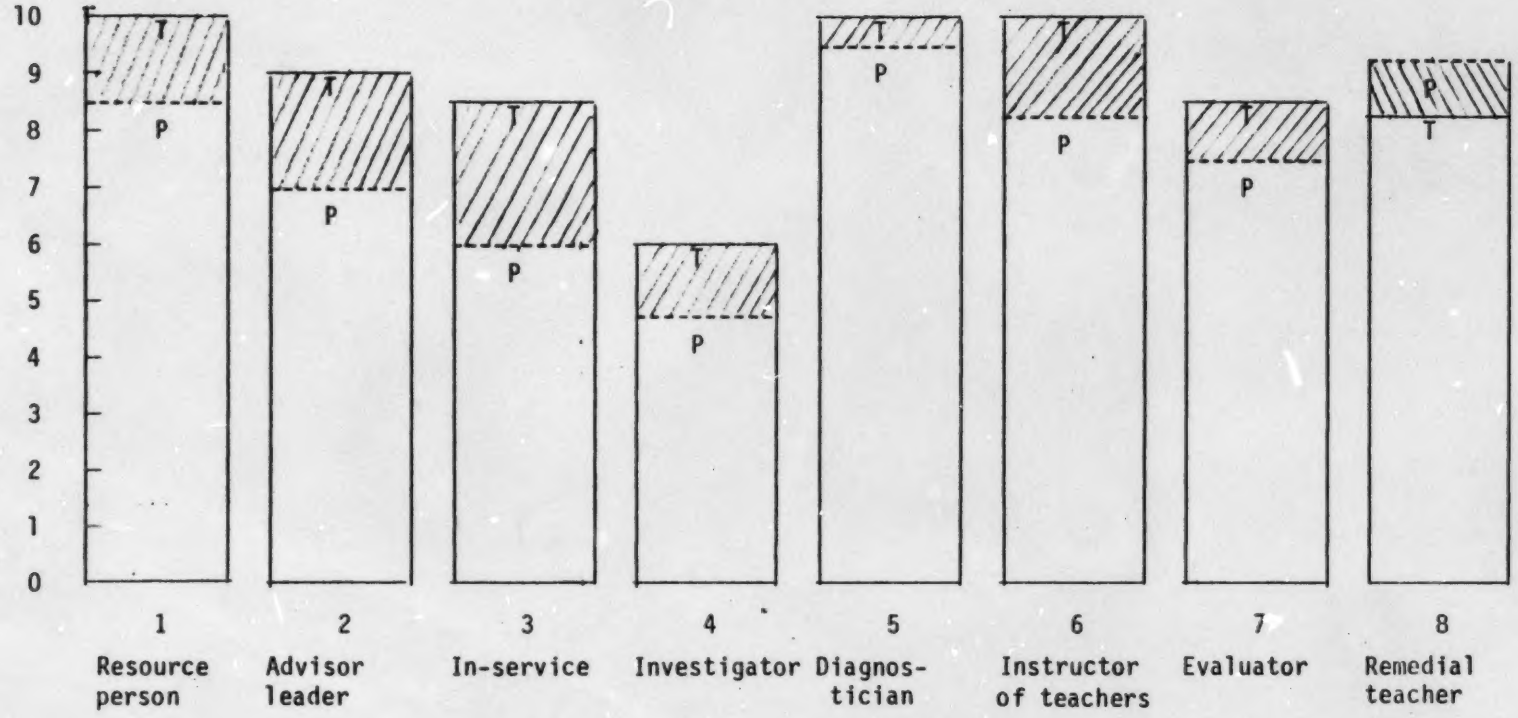

Figure 1. Mean ratings of reading specialists' own values and their perceptions of principals' values.

Table 1

Roles of the Reading Specialist

1. As a resource person, the reading specialist supplies materials on request, helps select and evaluate materials (including tests), suggests methods appropriate to individual needs, and answers questions about reading asked by staff members and members of the community.

2. As an advisor, the reading specialist advises administrators, teachers, and other members of the staff about the teaching of reading within the school or school system, keeps the school staff up to date on new developments in reading as reflected in research reports, experimentation in other school districts, and reports at professional meetings, and confers with parents, in order to interpret the school reading program or discuss individual problems.

3. As an in-service leader, the reading specialist arranges for and occasionally teaches in-service courses in reading, conducts demonstration lessons in the classroom of individual teachers or before groups of teachers, directs or arranges for short-term informal sessions, or workshops, in which groups of teachers may give specific attention to certain problems that arise in carrying out the instructional program in reading, and plans and helps to implement the total school in-service program, especially those aspects which are directed toward the training of new teachers.

4. As an investigator, the reading specialist encourages teachers to experiment with new material and methods, designs research plans involving a group of teachers, the school, or the school system and reports the results of these research studies.

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7. As an evaluator, the reading specialist directs, supervises, or coordinates school-wide testing programs involving reading achievement and capacity testing, interprets test results to the staff and community, investigates the curriculum and teaching procedures to ascertain ways of correcting faults demonstrated by test results, conducts with the help of the total staff complete periodical evaluations of the reading program, and assists in the selection of new tests to be used in a school program.